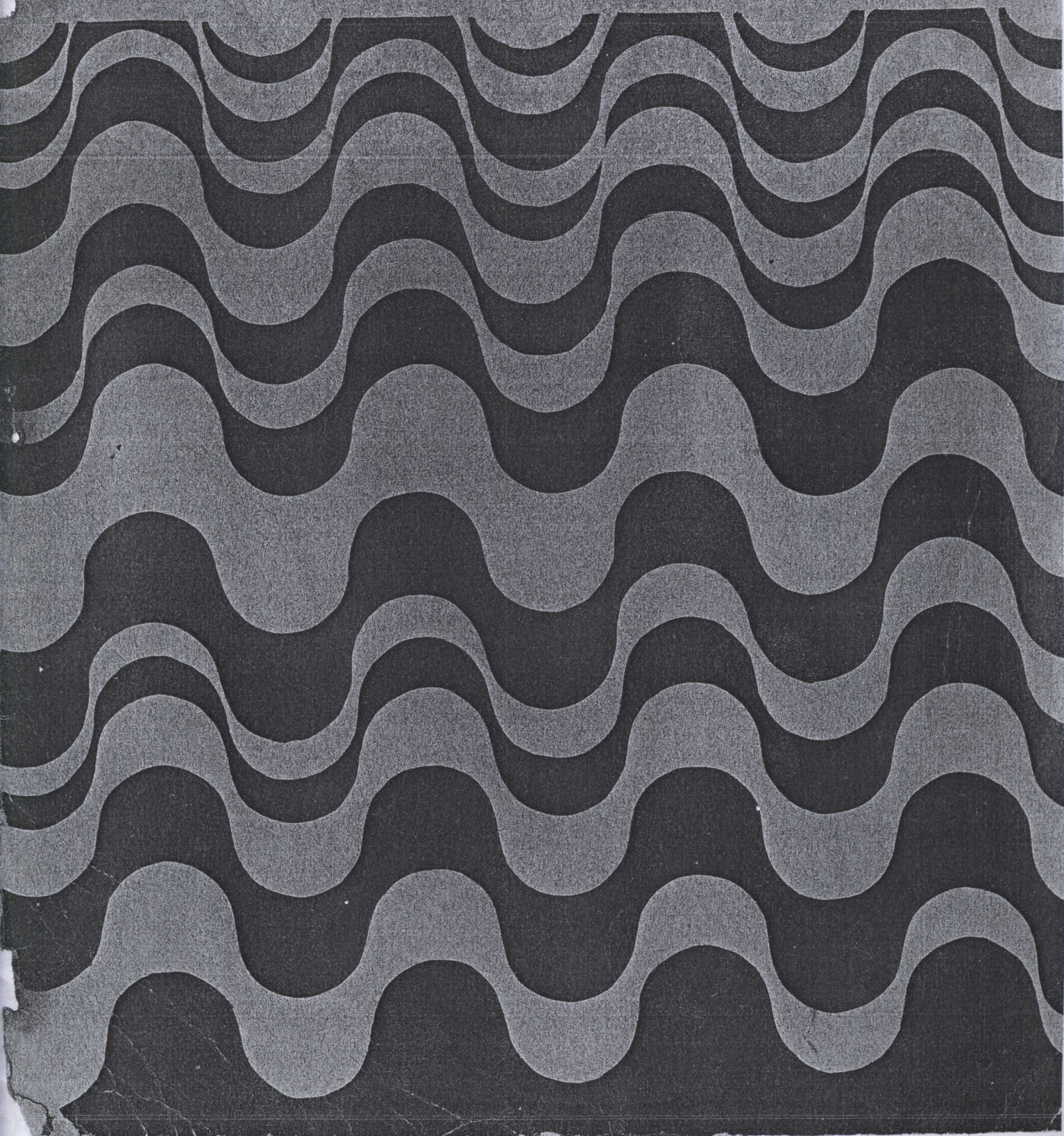
the sailorman 1

Nov. '67



They that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters;
These see the works of the Lord,
And his wonders in the deep.
For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
They mount up to the heaven, they go
down again to the depths;
Their soul is melted because of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
And are at their wit's end.
Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh the storm a calm,
So that the waves thereof are still.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Welcome aboard the "Sailorman". Beginning a magazine is like beginning a boat; one part wants to rush into the job, the other holds back and hesitates. In fact, why begin yet another Yacht Magazine when there are so many on the news-stands?

Let's go back into history. For hundreds of years there have been two distinct traditions and styles of sailing in Britain. "The King's Navee" and Commercial Sail".

History books tend to concentrate on the King's Navee. - After all it did protect Britain for several hundred years. The tradition of the Royal Navy, well written-up by Forster in his "Hornblower" series, is part of our folk myth.

Yachting, sailing for pleasure, developed out of the Navy tradition. At first every yacht carried cannon and performed Naval manoeuvres. The first yacht clubs were granted royal charters to fly special flags, in order to setarate them from the "common sailor. The "Common Sailor" - there's the rub, the flaw in our Navel myth.

The british Navy was run on snobbery and social prejudice. Exceptional men could and did rise from the ranks of the "common sailor". Captain Cook was a notable example, but by and large the Navy was officered by "Gentlemen's sons" who depended for their career opportunities to a large extent on patronage - breeding ground for snobbery.

That snobbery has continued on into the present world of yachting, and ties in with other faults of the old Navy - overmanning and over-decoration.

The Navy ships were over-manned, carrying a surplus of men for fighting purposes. For these men work had to be found. The result was varnished woods, white decks, shining brass and dozens of men to handle the sails.

It's this lingering tradition more than snobbery that "The Sailorman" is interested in correcting. Overmanning can still be seen in a modern ocean racer; a five-or-six man crew on a 35' boat and huge expensive winches taking the place of more men.

Overdecoration produced varnished wood, chomium plate, glass windows, elaborate gadgets for telling the wind direction. If rich men want to spend their wealth in that way, good luck to them. This writer has no desire to stop them. Unfortunately, The Yacht Magazines hold up this way of building boats, this approach to the sea, as the ideal one.....with the result that

the price of the poor man's boat is creeping up and up. Winches at £15 and more, sprout like mushrooms on yachts that just don't need them. Aluminium masts are used where simple solid wood will do. There is no one writing against this trend.

Until "The Sailorman" that is. "The Sailorman" intends to sling on to the ideas and philosophy of the common sailor. We are interested in building boats, not luxury yachts. If windward efficiency is improved by 5% at the price of £1000 added to the cost of a 30' boat, we will have the less efficient boat to windward, or, if we have the money with the saved £1000 we will either build a bigger boat that can sail faster and so get to its destination at the same time and with more comfort, or we will spend the £1000 on a pleasant 11 months' sailing cruise to the West Indies and back.

The "common sailors" are dying fast. This writer learnt from three. Two were bargemen of the Thames Estuary and the other was an old sailing drifter from Scotland. These men are now dead. It's left to us to carry on the tradition that they represented. "Do it yourself with the minimum of fuss". Will it work? Get on with it and offer friendship. "Want a hand Jack?" - That is our job.

Helping us, holding the magazine chat together, is our Editor: Maggie Oliver. There is a good reason for this. In the past women frequently sailed and worked with their husbands on a boat. Most of the readers of this magazine who are building their own boat are backed by a woman, who writes the letters, hold the dolly, brings the tea out, and puts the tools away. She saves so that we have the money to build the boat. So, why not a woman Editor?

I will push a little in the background, but remember it is our magazine. Its success depends on every reader. We welcome criticisms and suggestions.

Thanks in anticipation.

THE LAUNCH OF THE KATRINA.

(A 'Swift') 14'6" Catamaran)

"Right", said Charles, "let her go". The two white hulls slid off the trailer in Bala Lake. We'd hoped for a gentle day for our first catamaran trials, but it turned out to be a lion of a day. The sails crack-cracked in a stiff breeze and their sheets lashed about the decks like wild snakes. My wife looked up at the great tree of a mast and the white sea of sail waiting to fill and bend to the wind. I shared her feelings. We had only sailed a little tub of a dinghy before. Charles and Frank and I had spent all those hours and weeks putting together the parts of the kit; glueing and sanding and painting. Then it was a dead thing; now it was very much alive, poised, expectant; waiting for our courage to crystalise, for us to step aboard confidently and sail serenely away.

A last check around; rudders lowered, centreboards in place, sorting out of all the confused mass of ropes and halliards. Then, with no confidence at all, we tumbled aboard. Charles swung us round. Like a sprinter at the starter's gun, we were away. We shot from the shore before we could disentangle our gripping legs from the chaos on the deck. Centreboards were dropped and, whilst we hurtled into the taller waves, we grabbed the sheets and the tiller and struggled into an uncomfortable position on the narrow side decks. This was the best of all our work. Would those shroud fixings, apparently so fragile, really hold against this jerking pressure? The whole crew weight was suspended from the mast on the bolt and those two small screws. Would that plywood beam really take all the thrust of mast on deck; those tiny deck beams stand the pounding of all these waves? There was no time to think; just thrust on grimly holding our seats. The horrible thought came to us that before long we would have to go about, for the far shore was growing nearer at an alarming rate. All our reading had told how, though catamarans were thrillingly fast, they needed special drill to get them to go about. Anxiously we set our minds to follow the book. We gingerly turned up and, hauling in sheets to sail further and further into the face of the wind. Suddenly we came to a full stop; sails flogging and then went astern without having achieved our object. There was perilously little sea room left; nothing to do but try again. So we gathered speed, tightened up into the wind again all ready to go onto the return reach. We moved over to our new positions and then.....full stop, sails flapping. She positively refused to go over. Sea room was now desperately small. It was only yards to the shore. Yet there was no alternative. We gathered speed towards the single, sailed up into the wind but remembered to hold the jib backing just that extra moment and we were away

scrambling across the slippery deck with relief, we hauled on our sheets and headed for our launching site accelerating until we literally roared over the water. We sliced the waves and sheets of green shot over the deck and out of the scuppers at the rear. The description of catamaran sailing as like riding a billiard table under a cold shower was no longer funny. Spray like that from a speedboat from the two plunging bows met between the hulls and, despite deflectors, came up in a stinging hailstorm. We caught up and overtook a heeling Enterprise but hardly dared to look, sheets hard gripped as we tore past on our level keels. The home shore was fast coming up and instant preparations had to be made, centreboards lifted and rudders released. Our streaming wake curved round as we came up along the beach and dropped speed.

"How was it?" called Charles.

"Marvellous" we said.

Konneth W.Paterson.

Life at sea summed up by one sailor's wife:

"99% boredom and 1% terror!"

By another:

"Boredom never ever".

The ORO builders are planning to forego modern yacht clothes and go in for home-made leather jerkins thonged in places. They may have something. Were the old sailors all that tough? Or did their clothes keep them warm, if they were wet. Has anyone any experience of leather clothes? (home-made ones).

R A K A (RONGO DESIGN!)

It's true. After 5 years persistant endeavour, 3 of them backing the right horses, Jack Gale of Dublin is going to launch his 40 ft 'Raka' this springtime. The party will be an "Irish Party" - equalled only by West Indian parties. They will probably forget to launch the boat in the joy of the party - but that's only an excuse for another party.

Jack Gale knew about catamarans from his friends who live in Harran but his desire to build a catamaran himself began at such a party. He was blowing his cornet; Wharram was singing a Yugoslav folk song, and someone played the Scottish bag-pipes - it was that kind of party!

Stone cold sober, Jack turned up with the money for a set of plans a few days later, "I have sold one of my carburetors from my racing car", he said. "Hence the money to pay. I am finished with car racing. I've always wanted a catamaran. This is it. In 5 years time I will have my own"-"5 years? "-" Yes, 5 years, I'm taking my time!"

The first year, Jack went from boatyard to boatyard along the Irish coast looking for a good one with a low quote for the hulls. Then, he had to swop bank managers to get one who would give him an overdraft. But, in 1961, at the L.M.S yard in Dundalk, work commenced, and in 8 weeks the hulls were finished.

Then fibre-glassing began. Jack had a fine young friend, Barry, who led his 6 friends astray to Jack's boat. Fish and chip dinners did the rest. The boat was rapidly fibre-glassed to the specifications of a fibre-glass "expert". Unfortunately, however, the "expert" though correct in his resin, which set like glass had advised coarse matting instead of cloth. Even to Jack the finished product looked, like a white painted horse blanket.

"Sand it Jack" he was advised. Jack did, 4 days every week in the snow and in the summer. He sanded nearly 3,000 sq.ft. of rock hard fibre-glass and after the sanding and stopping up of bubble holes, came sanding again.

Money began to get tight in the home. With a wife and children to feed and educate a lesser man would have given up. Perhaps Jack would have done - perhaps. Fortunately he had a friend - all Irishmen have their friends - who knew all about horses. Here is a list of goods brought from his winnings.....

1 Hand Bearing Compass.
20 Fathoms 5/16 Anchor Chain.
1 35 lb C.Q.R. Anchor.
1 "Clyde" Anchor Winch.
1 Stem Roller Fairlead.
1 Pair 7 x 50 Binoculars.
6 5 gallon Plastic Jerrycans.
2 Plastic Bilge Pumps.
1 40 ft. Silver Spruce Tree (Main Mast)
1 Stainless Steel Knife Sharpener.
3 Aladdin Lamps.
1 Anchor Lamp.
1 Port Lamp.
1 Starboard Lamp.
1 Phillips Transister, Battery, Record Player.
1 P-10 Grid Compass.
1 Plastic Sink Unit.
1 Baragraph.

Total = Aprrox. £150

Though Jack says modestly that he did not win every time (What happened, did they run out of dope? Ed.) Nor will he give the name of the friend!

He is happy though. He is dreaming of new seas, another home. No more cold hours on the turf waiting to collect his winnings. He's going to the Mediterranean. He says he has a friend there; (in Monte Carlo!) Not everyone has Jack's patience or friends, but his perseverance is worth remembering.

Did you know ladies, you can buy girdles, according to a recent yachting magazine with Ship Motifs on? Is this the only way to get a sailor to show an interest!

Any ideas on how to treat one's best friend - the one who gets your ply on timber charge - one's best friend's woman who wears stiletto heels on your deck?

Always have sheets of sandpaper around the building site. When unwelcome visitors come carry on working, then say "Please help me a little - sandpaper that for me".

_ They never stay long!

DREAM BOAT.

I've dreamed of sailing all my life,
Of boats I've seen a few.
I started like so many have
By building a canoe.

The old canals then were my home,
Canoeing helped my figure.
Until my family came along,
I needed something bigger.

A lifeboat hull became my own
A cabin I soon started.
But when I saw the work I'd done
I stood back broken hearted.

She'd rubbing strips from stem to stern
to keep us safe from harm,
And six foot headroom fore and aft,
She looked just like a barn.

I thought I'd have another try
So went and bought a whaler,
And as I sat upon the thwart
I felt just like a sailor.

When she was launched I was so proud,
I thought I'd burst with joy.
So for a while (a year or two)
I gaily sailed my toy.

Then one day sitting on a hill
Jim Wharram said to me,
I'll design a boat for you
Then you can go to sea.

Two hulls you need, said he to me
Now build them slim and long,
And as you work it's better with
A Polynesian song.

A bridge deck then you make he said,
A deck both high and wide,
No fancy bridge house through for you,
The hulls you'll live inside.

So once again a boat I'll make
With added zest and skill,
And wood and glue, I'll build my dream
That started on a hill.

Eric Jones.

.....Advice to any Poet Critics:

Mr.Jones is a Pistol Champion -
holding the News of the World award.

FEEDING TIME ON BOARD.

Mealtimes aboard ship resemble something a little short of chaos, unbeknown to the revered captain, of course.

The crew, like starved crocodiles feel it their duty, being now officially off-work, to yell titbits of inconsequential information through the hatches to the long-suffering cook. It is nearly 6 o'clock as the hungry horder charge down into the steamy precincts of the galley, to wait expectantly to consume the delicious fare, they hope, the poor misguided fools, will be laid before them.

The harassed cook leaps to grab a steaming foaming saucepam, in mid-conversation with the jovial crew who will insist on interrupting. Everything is ready, the hissing, bubbling, burning dies down. A delicate operation ensues; juggling with the pots on a 2 ring stove, so that everything keeps warm and nothing burns while serving. Panic, where, oh where are the plates? Providing a lid for a saucepan? under the stove? hiding under the potato peelings? in the washing bowl? No? Ah - (stubbing her toes against some hot, hard object) warming on top of the kettle on the floor.

Quick, dish up before the food is like soggy cardboard. Broad smiles light up the faces of the hungry crew - their last meal was all of 5 hours ago. For a few precious moments silence reigns, then is broken at irregular intervals by grunts and sound of healthy mastication.

The cook leans against the stove, closes her eyes, peace, but not for long. A strangled shout from the skipper; he's never satisfied, demanding where's this or that or the other. He glares balefully, brandishing his fork from the other end of the loaded table. Wearily, in between serving someone else, the cook passes him the required item, longing for the day when she has the courage to throw the lot at him.

Slumping down, she picks up her unappetising plate of dry slowly congealing food tasting like sand. The crew revived by the first course break out in a manner similar to chattering hyenas, while the cook has not the energy to spike a wrinkled pea with her fork. Soon they are screeching for their pudding. They fall on their plates with a raucous clatter of spoons. Then sit back, with bloated stomachs, a mug of boiling tea in hand, contented to talk and laugh

over the day's events. They can laugh, they haven't been cooking in a foot square space in a near tropical atmosphere.

The meal is over, the cook stares diconsolately at her burnt hands, scalded fingers, cautiously feels her reddened eyes, swollen from the heat, registers the deep thumping headache. She looks like a boiled sausage. The skipper smiles benignly, thinking he can make intelligent conversation with the work-weary cook, who wants only to drift off into pleasant snores. No more worries until the dreaded hour of feeding comes round again.

Let this be a warning to all those who offer to take a turn in the galley - DON'T!

CHONA.

My RONGO is called CHONA and this means CAT in the language spoken around the Great Lakes in Central Africa. I was brought up there and hence CHONA has sentimental associations as well as being appropriate.

When I came across Jim Wharram's two articles in 'Boats' about his return across the Atlantic from the Carribean, and had scrutinised the excellent cover photograph and devoured countless times the compelling text, I guessed that I might have found the boat I wanted to own. It remained to go and see RONGO and this Lynda and I did at Easter 1964. An unfortunate mishap with our car the week before we went made it necessary both to hire one for the journey to Deganwy and to curtail our visit. However, twenty four hours were enough to confirm my earlier optimism and work started in the fall of that year on the frames and bulkheads.

I waited patiently for the first enthusiasm to die off but was disappointed, for, far from falling off, the project has assumed the proportions of an obsession!

The design lends itself very easily to adaptation as a variable beam craft, which is necessary, in my case, for it to fulfil its initial role as a river boat - on the upper reaches of the Thames the locks are only 17 feet wide. Jim had remarked that, although the carpentry was arduous, it was elementary and, if it will encourage any other budding boat builders with ten thumbs, this I am pleased to confirm. So far the only serious divergance from the very excellent design has been to follow up a suggestion of Jim's that the stringers should be fastened directly to the frames

and thus avoid most of the knotching, this only being required near the stem and stern posts and for half an inch in the case of the extra thick chine and gunwale; this simplifies the work involved besides increasing the frame sections. The resulting gaps between the stringers are filled with 1½ inch wide fillets. I also propose to put in double the number of intermediate frames and to fill in all the spaces between stringers and frames with one inch resin bonded blockboard 'squares', but in this I am open to disuasion. The keel is in two 1½ inch layers, the first laid longitudinally and the second transversely in 6 inch wide strips. The skeg keels are 2 inches thick and built into this second layer. I have been fortunate to get hold of fibreglass and resin at almost trade prices and so have opted to do all exterior surfaces in this very durable finish.

Finally, I have been told about 'hopper' type ventilation ports which have been recommended to me as being cheap, easy to construct and effective. I would be very interested to hear from anyone with views on this.

Tony Thomas.
(The Atomic Energy Man)

If a man from the Atomic Energy Place builds a boat so strong - 1" block-boards between frames!!!! something very dangerous is brewing in the world. Either join the C.N.D. quick, or better still, finish your boat and get to sea!

James Wharram, the designer, wrote on a drawing:-
"Measure twice cut once".
Cut two bulkheads on his new boat 8" too narrow.

It makes one think?

On finding a small leak in a boat which the skipper won't deal with, don't let fresh water collect. Throw a handful of salt in the brine and it will preserve the wood. This is a splendid and good excuse to save unnessary work.

We are pleased to hear that Mr.Derek Fenn of Donnington, Salop, has so far erected the frames, backbone and the four foot stringers of his "Tangaroa". He has saved a fair amount by purchasing his stringers, 3" x 1" from a building friend at 3d a foot. He is using exterior grade plywood, £2.12.0 for 8' x 4' x $\frac{3}{8}$", which can be coated with a waterproofing compound followed by paint. He would be interested to hear an opinion of a Nava-Pal R.D.F. set if anyone has had experience of one.

Rum is 7/- a bottle in the West Indies. From North Wales its about 12-15 days to the Canaries; from the Canaries 25-32 days to the Rum Isles of the Caribean. Just follow the others!

Editor:- M.Oliver,
3, The Avenue,
Richmond.
SURREY.